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LETTER DATED 24 FEBRUARY 1997 FROM THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 9 (b) (i) OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991) ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On behalf of the Executive Chairman, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Joint Statement signed by the Executive Chairman and Mr. Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, during the Chairman's visit to Baghdad from 20 to 23 February. The Joint Statement reflects, inter alia, the Government of Iraq's acceptance of the removal of the destroyed missile engines out of Iraq for expert examination abroad in line with the statement of the President of the Council of 30 December 1996 (S/PRST/1996/49).

The Executive Chairman stands ready to provide a more detailed oral briefing to the members of the Council, should they so desire, following his return to the office on Monday, 3 March.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Council.

(Signed) Charles DUELFER
Officer-in-Charge
Deputy Executive Chairman

* Reissued for technical reasons.

Annex

Joint Statement dated 23 February 1997

Pursuant to the Joint Programme of Action of 22 June 1996, a bimonthly meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq and the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission was held in Baghdad from 20 to 23 February 1997. The meeting resulted in the following:

As a follow-up to the December 1996 discussions in the missile field, the Government of Iraq presented explanations on issues of concern which had been raised by the Special Commission on that occasion. This enabled further progress to be achieved regarding the accounting of proscribed long-range missiles.

The Government of Iraq agreed to the removal of remnants of proscribed missile engines from Iraq for in-depth technical analysis by the Commission. The analysis will be carried out with the assistance of a team of international experts, under the supervision of the Commission, at laboratories offered by contributing Governments. Before the removal, some of the missile components would be examined in Iraq to collect additional data relevant to the accounting of proscribed missiles. It was agreed that the Commission will communicate to the Government of Iraq the findings of the analysis as they become available and that the Commission's conclusions thereon will not be reported or made public without consultations with the Government of Iraq.

Following the methodology used for the December 1996 missile discussions, the Government of Iraq and the Commission started a detailed review of the chemical weapons area at the high political level. The Commission presented its concerns on outstanding issues in this field. In-depth technical discussions were held between the experts of both sides. The Government of Iraq undertook to continue addressing the Commission's concerns and to that effect it was agreed to carry out joint intensive work. In this context, a follow-up technical level meeting will be held in mid-March.

The two sides reiterated their commitments to the Joint Programme of Action. The February talks were carried out in a constructive and professional manner, aimed at closing the proscribed weapons related file as defined in section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

The Deputy Prime Minister and the Executive Chairman agreed to meet in Baghdad during the first week of April 1997.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister
Republic of Iraq

(Signed) Rolf EKEUS
Executive Chairman
of the Special Commission